

Central Coventry Fire District
Board of Directors Monthly Meeting

August 19, 2008 - 7:00 pm
Central Coventry Fire Station 4

Minutes

1. Call to Order – 7:01 pm

2. Roll Call

President: Girard Bouchard – VP: Joe Bonn (8:15 pm)

Anna Mae Lapinski - Robert Crowe - Ron Gizzarelli - Elaine Hunt

Treasurer: Tom LaColle

Asst Chief Tucker

Clerk: Tracy Hall

Not Present - Chief Seltzer, Tax Collector: Jeanne Graemiger, Linda Giguere,

Additional People Present: Mrs. Lyons, Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Streker

3. Approval of Minutes of the previous Board of Directors Meeting – 7/15/08

Motion to Approve: Robert Crowe Seconded: Anna Mae Lapinski

All Vote Aye

4. Old Business

Staffing Issues – more info in Chief's Report

Asst Chief Tucker provided some info on the new hire; he has been

on for 5 weeks. He is currently working days and receiving a combination of ride along and classroom training. We are also working with East Greenwich Fire as they are running an academy for their new guys and a couple of new guys from Tiverton Fire.

Taxpayer request to address Board re: exemption & valuation

Mr. Streker requests that the 100% permanent and totally disabled veteran's exemption be reconsidered. Mr. Bouchard comments that this has been discussed a couple of times before and we as a fire district are not required to allow this exemption. Some districts did allow exemptions in the past. When the districts merged the combined board decided not to allow any exemptions. Mrs. Hall pointed out that the state law Mr. Streker was citing says that a city or town "may by ordinance passed" allow the exemption. The District would have to research and create an ordinance to allow the exemption. There was some discussion of the low income credit. Mrs. Hall explained that the low income state law section allows for a credit directly against the tax whereas the exemption Mr. Streker is requesting reduces the tax by reducing the valuation. Mr. Streker brought up the issue of the Town freezing his valuation. Mrs. Hall pointed out that it was a similar situation in that the District would have to create an ordinance to provide for that. Currently we do not have one. Therefore we do not use the frozen valuation in figuring his tax amount. Mr. Streker asked if the exemptions were allowed before why not now. Mr. Bouchard said that when the districts merged they created a new charter and became a new organization.

Mr. Streker then stated he would like a copy of the charter and minutes of the meeting where the exemptions were discussed. There was some additional discussion. Mr. Bouchard advised Mr. Streker that this would be an issue to bring up at the Annual Meeting on October 6th. There was some additional discussion regarding researching and creating an ordinance for this issue.

Mrs. Hunt made a motion to reconsider the creation of an exemption for 100% permanent & totally disabled veterans for future tax years.

Motion: Elaine Hunt Seconded: Anna Mae Lapinski

All Vote Aye

A study committee is formed of Mr. Gizzarelli, Mrs. Hunt & Mr. Crowe

Mr. Bouchard referred Mr. Streker to the Tax Collector for any past due amounts and said that the reconsidering of the exemption did not mean that we would be waiving any interest charges.

Mrs. Lyons received notice that she was included in the upcoming Tax Sale. She was told she owes five years of back taxes. She is not sure if that is correct but she is having trouble locating her records. She re-mortgaged her house in 2004 and thought all of the taxes were paid then. She is having some rough times financially and is hoping to get taken off the Tax Sale List. Asst Chief Tucker said that he had spoken to the Tax Collector and the Tax Sale had been postponed as many people had come in to make arrangements to pay. He also

added that once a payment was made towards the amount due the Tax Collector will make arrangements with the taxpayer to pay the rest. Mrs. Lyons said she had made a \$500.00 payment yesterday. Mr. Crowe suggested that she contact the closing attorney as he would have the information regarding what was paid at the closing. He added that if it was not a local attorney he may not have known to check for fire taxes. Mrs. Lyons stated that is was with Ameriquest who is no longer in business. Mr. Bouchard told Mrs. Lyons that we will send a note to the Tax Collector that she will be contacting her to set up some payment arrangements. Mrs. Lyons thanked the Board. Mrs. Lapinski requested that Mrs. Graemiger provide some details about how many and how much is involved with the Tax Sale. Mr. Bouchard said that request will also be included with the note to Mrs. Graemiger. There was some additional discussion about the process of how a property goes to Tax Sale.

5. President's Report

The Contract with Local 3372 has been signed. Copies have been provided to all Board members. Mrs. Hall noted that the health insurance policy which is part of the contract was not included with their copies as it is voluminous. If anyone wants to see it Mrs. Hall has a copy at her desk. Just after it was signed Blue Cross announced a large increase in their rates. Chief Seltzer & Union President Gorman are working on that with Blue Cross. Mrs. Lapinski asked how big the increase was. Mr. LaColle responded that it was 28.1% on medical and 7.4% on dental.

Mr. Bouchard visited the Tax Collector's office. Things are running smoothly there and Mrs. Graemiger expects to collect 100% of the money budgeted for. He also visited Station 7. All of the inside work is complete and it looks great.

**Motion to Approve: Anna Mae Lapinski Seconded: Ronald Gizzarelli
All Vote Aye**

6. Chief's Report

Chief Seltzer is out of town; Asst Chief Tucker presented his report.

Mr. Bouchard said he had noticed that Rescue 5 was out of service often. Asst Chief Tucker responded that this time it is an electrical problem. There was some discussion regarding using a reserve rescue or borrowing a rescue but there are issues with fitting the truck in the Station. There are also issues with the Plymovent system and drainage in front of the Station. Chief Seltzer is checking into the options.

Mr. Bouchard suggested that we set up a work session to discuss the Budget. There was some discussion regarding when to have the work session. Meeting set for Monday, September 25th at 6:00pm.

Mrs. Hunt had questions regarding administrative assistant position. In her previous human resources experience, holding 37 interviews for an entry level position is a lot of time. Her experience has been that 6 to 10 interviews are usually sufficient. Mr. Bouchard agrees. He will speak to the Chief and suggest we reduce the number of

interviews. Mrs. Lapinski added that she has some human resources experience too and 37 interviews would be very cumbersome.

Motion to Approve: Anna Mae Lapinski Seconded: Elaine Hunt

All Vote Aye

7. Treasurer's Report

Mr. LaColle presented his report. We are very close to our budget. Repairs & Maintenance, Fuel, Gas & Oil and Personnel are the largest line items over budget. Medical Expenses are under budget as we had planned for a possible expense that did not occur. Medical Insurance, Pension and Street Lighting are under as the amount we budgeted was an estimate. There were 3 purchases that were outside of the budget. They were a Dive Truck, A Chief's Vehicle and a Fire Marshal Vehicle. Those three come to about \$47,000. We have no control over when the Safer Grant money comes in; the paperwork has been submitted now we just have to wait for it.

Motion to Approve: Robert Crowe Seconded: Elaine Hunt

All Vote Aye

8. Tax Collector's Report

Mrs. Graemiger was unable to be here. Mr. LaColle presented her report. Mr. Bouchard added that the 4 districts have been combined into one tax roll. Last year the tax bills said Central Coventry Fire District but they also said Washington or Tiogue or Harris also. This year they will only say Central Coventry Fire District. Mr. LaColle spoke to Mrs. Graemiger and the current year tax roll has only a few

items left to check. We should have a final tax roll by the end of next week.

Asst Chief Tucker added that the Tax Sale was postponed due to the large response of people wanting to make payment arrangements. They have also met with the post office in regards to installing a locked mail box outside the building so there would be only one address on the bills for both the office location and mailing address. The Post Office was very receptive to the idea and recommended some styles that would be acceptable.

Motion to Approve: Anna Mae Lapinski Seconded: Robert Crowe
All Vote Aye

9. Seek to Convene an Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5
(a)(1)

Personnel – Assistant Chief

Motion to Close Meeting: Girard Bouchard Seconded: Anna Mae Lapinski

8:26 pm Roll Call Vote - All Vote Aye

Mr. Bonn stated that per his contract Asst Chief Tucker's pay structure was up for review in July. He has spoken to both Chief Seltzer and Asst Chief Tucker. They both feel that \$50 per week would be a fair amount. Ms. Lapinski and Mrs. Hunt both asked what % raise \$50 would be. Mrs. Hall provided a copy of Asst Chief Tucker's contract and figured it would be approximately a 4% raise;

the same as he received last year. This raise would be good for one year; his contract is up next year. There was some discussion regarding how the small gap between the Asst Chief & the Chief's pay is. Mr. Bonn said he had spoken to Chief Seltzer and he felt the Asst Chief deserved it. Mrs. Hunt asked how it compares to other departments. Mr. Bonn said East Greenwich is the closest comparison and we are below them. There was some discussion on comparing to other departments with different rank structures. There was also some additional discussion regarding the difference between the Asst Chief & Chief's pay here and in other departments. Mr. Gizzarelli asked about fringe benefits. Mr. Bouchard replied that the Chief, Asst Chief & the Union all have comparable benefits.

Motion to Open Meeting: Robert Crowe Seconded: Anna Mae Lapinski

8:42 pm Roll Call Vote - All Vote Aye

Mr. Bonn said the discussion in executive session was to give a \$50 per week increase which was approximately 4%. This raise would be in effect until next year when a new contract would be negotiated. Mr. Gizzarelli asked Asst Chief Tucker if he was happy with his fringe benefits. He indicated he was. Mrs. Hunt asked if this would be effective for his next pay period. Mr. Bouchard indicated that it would have to be retroactive back to July 1 as that was what was in his contract.

Motion made by Mr. Bonn to raise Asst Chief Tucker's pay by \$50 per week retroactive to July 1, 2008.

Motion to Approve: Joseph Bonn Seconded: Elaine Hunt

All Vote Aye

10. New Business

Impact Fees

Mr. Bouchard stated all members should have a copy of the draft submitted by Chief Seltzer regarding impact fees. He has not had a chance to review it. Mrs. Hall gave an explanation of the highlighted portions. The first highlighted section is the needs assessment that was mentioned in the Chief's Report. The next highlighted section is the amount of impact fees. By law these numbers must be based on the cost of the needs identified in the needs assessment. Most of the rest of the ordinance come from state law so there is not much that would need changing. Mr. Bouchard suggested that the Board review this and bring it back at the next meeting under Old Business. There was some discussion regarding the procedure for implementing the impact fee ordinance. Mr. LaColle suggested we add this to the budget work session as it would be a line added to the budget and Chief Seltzer would be there to provide more information. Mr. Bouchard agreed this would be a good idea. There was some additional discussion including that impact fees may only be used for capital items. Mrs. Hall provided the fees charged by East Greenwich. Mr. Gizzarelli asked how we monitor the development going on so we can charge these fees. Mrs. Hall replied that the Fire Marshall would

be collecting the fees when he approves plans for new projects. Further discussion will be held at the work session on Monday and at the next regular meeting.

2008-2009 Budget

Mr. Bouchard referred to the budget page in the Chief's report. Mr. LaColle stated that the Chief had provided him with the new contract two days ago. As that is the major portion of the budget he tried but was not able to get everything together for tonight. The list provided in the Chief's Report is the basics that make up a small percentage of the budget. Mr. LaColle will have more details at the work session.

11. Introduction of new business to be considered at the next Board Meeting - None

12. Good & Welfare

Mr. Crowe asked about adding names to the plaque on the rock in front of Station 3. He has spoken to people who are willing to pay for it. Mr. Bouchard directs Asst Chief Tucker to work with Mr. Crowe to get that done.

13. Adjournment – 9:02 pm

Motion to Approve: Anna Mae Lapinski Seconded: Elaine Hunt

All Vote Aye